



# PLAIN TALK for Parents

## About Your Five- to Six-Year-Old Child

Every child and parent is unique. This information highlights patterns of growth and development that apply to most children. As you watch, listen to, and play with your child, you'll discover when she or he is ready for new activities and skills. You'll find your own ways to use old and new ideas to fit your personality, your family, and your child's needs.

### GENERAL TRAITS

- Enjoys jump-rope, riding toys, & throwing balls.
- Likes to be helpful.
- Enjoys increasingly complex jigsaw puzzles.
- May be able to print first name, first letter of last name, two or three numbers recognizably.
- Loves to cut, trace, draw, paste, string beads.
- Likes to talk, talk, talk.
- Eats very adequately but manners are still far short of adult standards.
- Frightening dreams are frequent.
- Beginning to play games with rules, such as tag.
- Beginning to understand right & wrong. Is interested in the ideas of fairness & justice.

### WHAT A PARENT CAN DO

- Encourage activities with an adult such as sports, cooking, shopping.
- Give your child a chance to take on new responsibilities.
- Break tasks into small, easy steps.
- Accept mistakes; try not to take over the job.
- Be clear about the things you expect: "Please take out this trash bag now."
- Be sympathetic of failure and help your child express disappointment.
- Encourage pride in successes and pay more attention to them than to mistakes.

- Set firm limits. Indicate disapproval of fighting, hitting & teasing, or using bad language. Children learn by watching their parents, so avoid shouting & name-calling.
- Children need help understanding the difference between truth and fantasy, fooling & lying.
- Prepare your child for kindergarten. Visit the school with your child & be positive about school experiences. Accept fearfulness about school as normal. Talk with the teacher often about how your child is doing, likes & dislikes, school activities.

### TOYS FOR THE TO 5- TO 6-YEAR-OLD

- Scraps of material
- Blocks in various sizes
- Play dough
- Large bats & balls
- Cars & trucks
- Basic art supplies
- Beads & large buttons to string
- Puzzles with 14-16 pieces
- Costume box: hats, scarves, jewelry, old clothes
- Books & magazines to read, cut, paste
- Simple card & board games

This material was adapted from *St. Mary's Hospital Medical Center Guide to Health* with their permission.

